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Open Letter to the President
—South American Students

THE

Commonweal

Alienation and Response

The American Catholic Intellectual

by Daniel J. Callahan

Room at the Middle

New British Novels

by Martin Green

COMING ATTRACTIONS . . . . . by John Cogley
ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL: A POEM . . . . by Miriam Whaples
THE MONTESSORI METHOD . . . . . by John J. McDermott
WEEKLY CRITICISM . . . . . by Thomas E. Cassidy

Volume LXXII, No. 2 April 8, 1960 Twenty-Five Cents

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A Point of View

Editors, contributors and readers alike tend to agree that what is most significant and important about The Commonweal is that it is an embodiment of a point of view. Such a conclusion is supported by the type of quotations from and references to The Commonweal appearing in various metropolitan newspapers, on T.V. and in other mass media.

This viewpoint is most clearly manifest in The Commonweal's editorials each week on events and public issues. It also is developed, less directly, perhaps, in a variety of articles on many subjects—social, cultural and political — by such typical contributors as: Daniel Callahan, Senator Eugene McCarthy, John Cogley, Bede Griffiths, Richard Gilman, John P. Sisk and Michael P. Fogarty.

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THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

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Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Printed in the U.S.A. and published weekly, except biweekly during July and August, at 440 Post Road, Orange, Conn., by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N.Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685.

Copyright © 1960 The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.

U. S. and Canada, $8 a year. Foreign, $10. Single copies 25¢
Printed at the Wilson H. Lee Co., Orange, Conn.

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE COMMUNITY

DIRECTED AS IT is to concerns of "The Christian and the Community," the recent pastoral letter of Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, has relevance beyond the particular congregation to which it was addressed. Reminding his listeners that "God did not take us out of the world and history to save us, but He entered history to save the world," the Cardinal goes on to say: "The God-centered man will always have a profound sense of personal involvement with the affairs of the world. The Christian will be ever more deeply concerned because of his knowledge that Christ has assumed the burden of human sin. The problems are most pressing of all for Catholics."

The Cardinal then turns his attention to the urgent needs of our time and outlines the general approach which is indicated for the Christian today. In an orderly fashion he considers in turn such specific areas of human affairs as marriage and children, labor and leisure; as law, civic responsibility, pluralism and education; as the human family and international solidarity. Incomplete as it is, this listing indicates the wide range of the pastoral letter. Some few quotations will best suggest the deep consideration which has been devoted to each of these areas.

Discussing the Christian in the community, the Cardinal says: "Our responsibility as Christian citizens is great indeed, in these parts, where we cannot plead a minority status. Our honesty and truthfulness, which are basic natural virtues, enjoy no exemptions from civic duty. They are of fundamental obligation unless we are to become totally cynical and ungodly in our civic life. Our religious convictions should undergird our reverence for law.

"Those who enter public life take on even greater responsibilities demanding of them an even higher concern. The good of all the people within their authority, the perfection of the total society, takes precedence over every partisan or individual interest however worthy. Elected by the people, they owe service to all the people."

Of pluralism, specifically religious pluralism, Cardinal Cushing says ". . . we cannot allow religious divisions to disturb our many social and political contacts with our fellow men. But transcending this, there is the tremendous call of Christ, who summons us all to unity. We shall not think well of unity of any sort, until we think well of one another. It is in the spirit of friends and brothers that we must converse and live with those who are not in the fold of the Catholic Church. We are forbidden, by the very operation of conscience, to compromise upon anything which touches upon the essence of faith. We extend equal respect to the consciences of those who find themselves in disagreement with us."

BEFORE turning to the particular needs and problems of Catholic schools, the Cardinal says: "We must show our interest then in all endeavors to improve the public schools for a better America. The public schools and their loyal administrators and teachers deserve well of the total community. This will be our conviction even in those places where it may be that none of our Catholic children attend such schools. In fact, nearly half of our young people do attend the public schools and the percentage will in all likelihood increase in the years ahead."

In reading these few quotations, and indeed the entire pastoral letter, some people will be first impressed by the relevance which they have to the immediate questions and controversies of American life. Others may wish to stress the unchanging prin-

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ciples on which they rest. But, in the pastoral letter, the two are, of course, conjoined; "our newest answers must rest on the oldest of principles."

It is because the two are intimately conjoined, because the immediate answers derive from lasting principles, that the pastoral letter breathes a spirit of honesty, openness and freedom, a spirit which is sorely needed and frequently absent from many of the debates of the day. All Catholics, particularly those who engage in public discussion and debate, will profit from reading "The Christian and the Community," from reflecting on the issues to which the Cardinal has directed his attention and from the spirit in which he has discussed them. Indeed, it is not too much to hope that in the coming months the pastoral letter will be noticed even beyond the Catholic community to which it is addressed.

BARRIERS TO IMMIGRATION

IF AUSTRALIA, Canada, Brazil and other lands are more sparsely populated than the United States, this country because of its size, natural resources, productiveness and climate is preeminent in its potentialities for absorbing immigrants. Its leadership in the free world makes it incumbent upon our nation to make a substantial extra contribution to the international resettlement problem during 1960, the World Refugee Year. We have the advantage of decades of experience in integrating immigrants.

Consistently, since the conclusion of World War II, many Americans have had an uneasy feeling that we were not doing our share in welcoming refugees and displaced persons to these shores. All too few of the brave adversaries and victims of totalitarianism have been afforded an opportunity to make a new start for themselves and their families in our comparatively prosperous New World. Despite the exceptions the nation has made for certain groups, such as the Hungarians, America's postwar immigration policy has failed to measure up to contemporary human needs.

Why has this been so? The temptation is to place the blame solely on such legislation as the McCarran-Walter Bill, which Congress passed in 1952 over President Truman's veto. That temptation is all the stronger considering that Mr. Walter has succeeded year after year ever since in blocking legislation which would have modified his law's provisions in any general way. In this he has been greatly assisted recently by his opposite number in the Senate (as far as strategic committee posts go), Senator James O. Eastland. President Eisenhower's efforts to secure less restrictive legislation go back at least to 1953, but there is little that is tangible to show for them.

Can it be said, then, that the present severe limitations on the admittance to this country of Asiatics and South Europeans, for example, have persisted solely through the power in Congress of a few willful men determined to retain such provisions? That seems unlikely. The American political system is hardly so impotent that chairmen of important House and Senate committees, by keeping legislation from getting to the floor, can thwart the national will indefinitely. The men in question have succeeded because sufficient national sentiment to oppose them and welcome more aliens to these shores has been lacking.

President Eisenhower recently urged Congress to adopt new legislation that by various means might double the present rate of immigration. He would, for instance, base national quotas on today's bigger population (rather than on foreign populations here in 1910). And he would increase the present faint trickle of Afro-Asian admissions six-fold by putting those peoples on the same quota system as those from various European countries. Moreover, the President would divide up the sizable quotas left unused by eligible nationals of Northern Europe among peoples who had already used up their small quotas. But Mr. Walter has frowned even upon these moderate proposals.

However, it must be said for the record that Representative Walter himself wants to make a gesture

Commonweal Associates

THE FIRST TWO weeks of spring enrollments of Commonweal Associates have brought eighty-four Charter and Sustaining Memberships. New enrollment cards will go out shortly to those who are helping the magazine continue publishing by becoming Associates for the first time, or by renewing their memberships. In an early issue The Commonweal will publish a list of this year's membership to date.

We are most grateful to those readers whose interest and generosity make this encouraging announcement possible, and we are confident that other readers who believe in what The Commonweal stands for and feel concern for its future will soon enroll as members of the Associates.

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for the World Refugee Year—and to make it in the form of permanent legislation. It would apply to refugees without specified number, period of time or national quota. For these exiles, if they can meet ordinary immigration requirements as to freedom from serious communicable disease and capability (for the head of a family) of self-support, two-year conditional stay here can lead to permanent residence and, eventually, to American citizenship. But the bill would not apply to the major groups: the Arab refugees, those in Hong Kong, European refugees from North Africa.

By confining this legislation to the forty-odd thousand now under the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Walter's bill greatly restricts the numbers to which it would be applicable; he himself estimates the admission of fifteen thousand families as a result. Even that is something. It indicates that the most determined opposition can yield in some degree to continued pressure. The achieving of a revised immigration policy here in the United States commensurate with the challenge of the times would seem to hinge on that.

PROTESTANTS ON THE PRESIDENCY

IN ITS "Listening Post," *Newsweek* for March 14 discussed Protestant opinion around the country on the question of a Catholic for President. The views of Protestant laymen and clergymen were reported separately, with results that were interesting, if admittedly inconclusive.

As far as geographical regions are concerned, the greatest difference was between the East and the South. In the East, Protestant clergymen were reported to be "moderately against a Catholic President," while Protestant laymen were described as "generally open-minded." In the South, the clergy were said to be "strongly against a Catholic President," with laymen "mostly against." The other regions came somewhere in between these two: the Midlands reported Protestant clergy to be "mostly against" and laymen to be "mostly open-minded"; in the West the clergy were "moderately against" and laymen "mostly open-minded"; the Southwest's clergymen were "strongly against" and its laymen "tend to be against."

Such reporting is, of course, not intended to do more than give a general impression. Lacking as it does, any kind of statistical breakdown, the survey makes no claim of "scientific" exactitude. Nonetheless, granting all this, the difference between Protestant clergy and laity on the issue that is reported in all areas, even the South, is interesting. If the *Newsweek* survey is correct, a Catholic candidate for President will not get the votes of many Protestant ministers, but Protestant laymen, by and large, seem to have their own views on this matter.

We would say, then, that there is much in the *Newsweek* report to comfort Senator Kennedy and his supporters. What must discourage him, as it does us, is the nature of some of the comment made by various ministers and quoted by *Newsweek*. Here we have in mind not the expressions of naked bigotry, about which little can be done easily or quickly, but rather the comments which show considerable ignorance on matters which have already been discussed and discussed and discussed.

Witness, for example, the minister-editor of a Protestant paper who told *Newsweek* that he wanted "assurances" from Senator Kennedy on such matters as Federal aid to parochial schools, the appointment of a U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, and the like—despite the fact that the Senator's "assurances" on these points were given, with great national publicity, many months ago, as anyone with even a slight acquaintance with politics or Church-State relations should know. After all, serious discussion of the issues involved in the candidacy of a Catholic for the Presidency has been going on for a considerable time, in both Protestant and Catholic circles. No one can blame those who come in late, but it is not too much to ask that they familiarize themselves with the terms of the argument and with what has already been said. For editors or clergymen who are in a position to influence public opinion, this preliminary preparation would seem to be a serious obligation.

LET THEM EAT PILLS

THE FORAND bill, which would provide medical care for the aged under the Social Security system, is probably drawing more mail than any other issue now before the Congress, according to a recent dispatch in the N.Y. *Times*. A sampling of the mail of one Senator—Jacob K. Javits of New York—turns up the usual arguments against such legislation (it is socialistic, anti-private enterprise, etc.) from the usual sources (doctors, insurance companies, pharmaceutical houses, etc.). But a breakdown of the letters shows a two-to-one approval of the bill, with old people and the chronically ill presenting their grievances in heartfelt and frequently bitter language.

We think these personal responses are indicative

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of the desperate importance of this problem to a great number of Americans, to whom it is foolish and irrelevant to speak in abstract and doctrinaire terms. The recent inquiry into exorbitant profits and price-fixing in the drug industry brought forth similar evidence that serious illness has nowadays become nothing short of a major catastrophe for many, particularly for the aged. We do not believe that pain and want are answered by stock phrases, and we doubt that Americans who have felt the burden of medical expenses today will be put off by mere bogeyman labels.

MEN ON THE LAND

OVER THE YEARS, this magazine has devoted a considerable amount of space, in articles and editorials, to the subject of the migratory worker in agriculture, with particular attention to the importation of farm workers from Mexico. Presumably our readers know where we stand, and by this time they have made up their own minds as to where they themselves stand on the issue. It could be argued, then, that we should now leave the subject and discuss something new.

Despite all the articles, editorials and protests of one sort or another that have appeared here and elsewhere in recent years, however, the fact remains that the situation of the migratory worker in general and the attitude toward the imported *bracero* in particular continues essentially unchanged. Improvements on this score or that have been made, in this area or that, and the attitude of Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell has come to be especially heartening, but the nub of the problem remains.

This is not to say, of course, that the migratory worker is without friends. Religious spokesmen, including representatives of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, have long urged Congress to take action against the evils imposed upon the migrant and his family. Some union leaders have shown too little concern, but labor has also produced some of the most articulate and effective spokesmen for the agricultural worker. Social action organizations like the National Sharecroppers Fund have labored valiantly in this area; the concern of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for example, is exemplified by a handsomely prepared, thoroughly documented booklet by Herbert Hill which is newly available from the N.A.A.C.P. office at 20 West 40th Street, New York 18, N.Y.

The truth, then, is not that the migratory workers lack friends; it is simply that they lack them in the right places. The Representative or Senator who takes up their cause does so only because he is convinced of its justice. To champion their cause is not, certainly, a vote-getting effort, as many even controversial issues are with at least some sections of the population. Mexican nationals cannot vote; American-born migratory workers can vote, but few do. Thus a Congressman who wants to help them cannot count on any support from the group itself, and he is certain to receive determined opposition from the growers who want no change in the status quo and who are powerful and well-organized. Under these circumstances, one must pay special honor to that small band of Representatives and Senators who have for years tried to improve the conditions under which the migrant lives and works, in the face of a most determined opposition.

Once again the time is upon us when the agricultural worker needs all the friends he can get, as a subcommittee of the House Committee on Agriculture weighs the future of the law providing that Mexican nationals be imported into the United States for agricultural work. On one side are the growers, who insist that the program, begun as a war emergency measure, be continued and that Secretary of Labor Mitchell share responsibility for its administration with the Department of Agriculture, which is more sympathetic to the growers' point of view. On the other side are those who are concerned with the abuses of the program and who urge that it be extended for only a short time, with additional safeguards. One of these was Monsignor George G. Higgins of N.C.W.C., who was not heard because of the subcommittee's "crowded schedule" but who submitted his views in writing, opposing extension of the law without substantial amendments and in any case favoring a termination date of 1963 or 1964 rather than the proposed 1966.

As for the subcommittee itself, there is no secret about the direction of its sympathies. As the N. Y. *Times* report on the hearings noted dryly, the group "has given to the grower interests its best hospitality. The migrant pleader may be asked a sympathetic question, but rarely." Under these circumstances there is a limit to what can be done in the subcommittee itself. But once this group has finished its work, Congress as a whole must be made to realize that the growers do not speak for all of us and that the migrant worker has friends who consider a vote on this issue an important matter of principle.

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Alienation and Response

It is small wonder that the American Catholic intellectual feels isolated and out of step

by DANIEL J. CALLAHAN

LABELING is a dangerous business. How the future historian will label the present age of the Church in America is impossible for us to say. Still, there are two labels given to our time which would apply unusually well to contemporary American Catholic intellectual life. I am thinking of Morton White's characterization of ours as an "Age of Analysis" and W. H. Auden's complementary one of ours as an "Age of Anxiety."

Nothing has been more pronounced in the recent literature on Catholic intellectualism than the absence of visionary schemes and grandiose plans for the future. Instead, the greatest part of the effort has gone into close analyses of our historical and sociological origins and detailed critiques of our faults, assets and potentialities. But to say that the present generation is an analytic one is to tell only half the story. What has induced this analysis has been an acute sense of anxiety about our deficiencies and a fundamental uncertainty about the future role of the Catholic intellectual.

Curiously, little has been written about the mentality of the contemporary Catholic intellectual. We have been told what his role in the past has been, what his role in the future ought to be. We have a fairly clear picture, statistically, of what he is doing and not doing. Such statistics, however, give only fragmentary clues to what historians sometimes call the "spirit" of a people. In this instance, the "spirit" of the Catholic intellectual in America can only be guessed vaguely from the things he has written about himself. In a sense this is to say the obvious. Yet the implications of the obvious are obscure.

There is no way of telling how the majority of Catholic intellectuals are, in fact, adjusting themselves to the dual demands of Church and society. Is the Catholic intellectual responding to the exhortations for a revived Catholic intellectual life or has the die already been cast in another form? What is the society in which he lives, particularly its intellectual life, doing to him? How, in short, is he adjusting the demands and values of society to the demands and needs of the Church? This last question is the central one. What the Catholic intellectual is or comes to be will be a function of the way he personally solves the problem of adjusting to demands often at variance with one another.

THE MOST immediate evidence of the impact that non-Catholic intellectual life is having is that now the American Catholic intellectual is attempting to find a place for himself in the general stream of American intellectual and social life. The concerns of the non-Catholic intellectual world are increasingly his concerns; its tensions and musings, his tensions and musings. As the walls of parochialism tumble, piece by piece, the common questions become more apparent and the general mood and temper more pervasive.

To take one specific example, the number of Catholics in non-Catholic academic societies is increasing rapidly. We still have the American Catholic Philosophical, Historical and Sociology Associations and they are not likely to disappear. But more and more members of those associations are becoming members also of their non-Catholic counterpart associations. More significantly, a considerable number of Catholic scholars will not join the Catholic associations at all. To this group, the very fact of separate Catholic professional societies merely fosters the separation these very societies spend so much of their time deploring at their conventions.

One is tempted to say that the pattern of the Catholic intellectual in America is beginning to approximate that of his counterpart in Europe in his sensitivity to non-Catholic thought. In the past, the American Catholic pattern was one of framing its own questions in response to the internal needs of the Church. These needs were often simply a matter of survival and bare

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existence. More often than not, though, what Catholic intellectual life there was originated from the necessity of meeting challenges and attacks from intellectual and social movements outside the Church. If anything new was developed it was often the result of the prick provided by external stimuli. This meant—and still means—a general intellectual lag. By the time Catholic intellectuals got around to responding to the dynamic currents in American intellectual circles these movements were often on the wane.

Even today it is rare for Catholics to be in at the start of broad intellectual developments. Only when these developments become threats or unavoidable issues do we respond. The very fact that so much of our talk of Catholic intellectualism is couched in the language of "meeting challenges," "countering threats," "taking our place," and so on indicates that initiative and foresight are not our strong points. Naturally, much of this can be explained sociologically and historically. But no one has yet shown how a separate system of higher education, scholarly journals, publishing houses and intellectual societies can overcome separation and cease to hinder assimilation.

THIS has not been the case for some time in Europe. Although there are Catholic universities, journals and societies, the intellectual life of the Catholic is better integrated with that of the non-Catholic. The average Catholic intellectual in Europe has attended the same schools, for a time at least, as his non-Catholic peer, reads the same journals and participates in the same broad intellectual circles.

To take one example, the majority of Catholic philosophers in England have had their undergraduate or graduate training at Oxford or Cambridge or have done some work at one or the other. The men who have shaped contemporary English philosophy are men who were once their professors, their friends and their associates. While their philosophical conclusions may differ radically from their non-Catholic colleagues, one finds in their writing the same language being used, the same technical problems being analyzed, and the same undercurrents at work. This is not to say that English Catholic philosophers feel themselves to be part and parcel of English philosophy. Far from it. But in comparison with the situation of the American Catholic philosopher they are well advanced.

In our country, on the contrary, as the Catholic intellectual emerges from his cultural and intellectual ghetto there is little ground on which to build. Like all newcomers to any established society, he is neither at home in the new nor happy with the old society. He is even more an alien in American intellectual life than he is in the broader social and political life. If he is at all successful in finding a place in the established order he is likely to do so at the cost of alienating himself from the Catholic milieu he must in part abandon. Both Catholics and non-Catholics are likely to see him as something of an anomaly; the Catholic may consider him a fellow-traveler of secularism, the non-Catholic may consider him a fifth-column agent of Catholic power. The general opinion that a Catholic cannot be a genuine intellectual and the native Catholic suspicion of the American intelligentsia only suggest the dimensions of the problem.

The difficulties the Catholic faces in being accepted in the non-Catholic intellectual world are real enough. The doubts that many Americans feel in general about Catholics are, if anything, intensified among intellectuals. A long heritage of separation is not quickly overcome. Yet this is just one side of the coin. Sharply put, popular American Catholic culture frequently causes the Catholic intellectual considerable agony, chagrin and frustration. It is a culture not of his making, a culture not greatly influenced by his work, a culture not altogether sure of his value. In few instances is it a culture that shares his non-religious goals, his aesthetic, social or political tastes. With rare exceptions most of the characteristic patterns of American Catholicism were shaped by different generations to meet different needs, and these patterns still dominate our parishes, societies and universities. Small wonder the intellectual feels isolated and out of step.

His training, temper and role impel the intellectual to judge the American Church in its actual cultural and sociological manifestations. He is forced to accept some strains of this culture, to reject others; to laud some of its spokesmen, to decry and work against the influence of others. He must make a thousand and one distinctions which do not trouble others at all. Worse still, if he does achieve some degree of assimilation into non-Catholic intellectual circles, he is likely to see the weaknesses of the Church with new eyes. He is likely to be a good bit more critical and sensitive about trends in American Catholicism which seem to bear out the objection that the Catholic intellectual is a contradiction in terms. And, of course, when he does become critical of American Catholicism, he may be accused by Catholics of having his judgment distorted by secularism. To complete the picture, the non-Catholic intellectual is tempted to dismiss the Catholic intellectual as the exception proving the rule when he learns that he is not completely acceptable in his own camp.

IN THIS kind of situation it would be astounding if the Catholic intellectual did not find his stance trying, ambiguous, and shot through with tensions and uncertainties. Both the Catholic and the non-Catholic world want his full allegiance—not one foot in one camp and one in another. But the very nature of the intellectual life demands a repudiation of the party spirit. The "intellectual" who sees his task as one of

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using his mind exclusively to further the interests of his party, faction or even church hardly deserves the name. This, unfortunately, is what he is expected to do.

It is easy enough to talk in the abstract about the duties and responsibilities of the intellectual life. It is far harder to put them into practice in the concrete realities of life. For the Catholic intellectual in particular, it is sometimes incredibly difficult to distinguish between the service of truth and the service of partisanship.

It is a very rare Catholic intellectual who doesn't manage to compromise himself in one way or other. The desire to rid oneself of the tensions generated by the intellectual life can be overwhelming. Two extreme ways of resolving conflict are worth noting. At one extreme is the suppression of embarrassment and alienation by violently repudiating what is non-Catholic; to "spit one's Catholicism in the face of secularists" as one ardent soul described his mode of adjustment. Another extreme is to repudiate American Catholic culture, to dissociate oneself from all that smacks of the popular, the old and the traditional in American Catholicism.

A psychoanalyst might describe these two radical alternatives as different, but related, ways of resolving inner stress: the one by turning aggression outward, the other by turning it inward. If neither of these extremes are common in a pure state, it is difficult not to succumb to one or the other from time to time. There are traces of both in our recent self-criticism as well as in the objection voiced by many that we don't need any self-criticism.

Neither of these extreme responses is unusual among minority groups, Catholic or non-Catholic. On the ethnic level, every minority in this country has had its share of members who work off their frustrations by rigid defensiveness or outright repudiation of what they are taken to represent. This is no less true of the intellectual as a minority group.

Too often in America the intellectual has been accused of disloyalty and subversion. He *has* been disloyal: to the *status quo,* to the popular mores and fads and to the jingoistic values taken to be true Americanism. So too, he has frequently been excessively provincial in defending America against the attacks of European intellectuals. Analogously, the American Catholic intellectual occupies a comparable position within the American Church. He too is often disloyal in the same (and good) sense but he too is capable, on occasion, of succumbing to ecclesiastical chauvinism.

The analogy can be pushed a step further. As the American intellectual (until very recently) found much of his inspiration in European thought, so the Catholic intellectual is often forced to turn to European Catholicism for his inspiration. While this inspiration may save the day for the Catholic, it makes it all the more difficult for him to adjust himself to the American scene. And the folks back home, often quite satisfied with the progress of the Church in America, are rarely happy when he holds up for emulation German or French Catholicism.

It might be comforting if we could believe that the alienation of the Catholic intellectual in America is just a temporary matter which will lessen with the passage of time. It is just beginning, for the conditions which create it are really only beginning. That is, we are now entering a long transition period in which more and more Catholic intellectuals will seek to break down the walls of separation between themselves and American intellectual life. Undeniably, there will always be some fundamental differences which will divide us, as Catholics, from our non-Catholic brother. No less certain is the fact that the Catholic intellectual—if he does his proper work—will continue to collide with forces hostile to him within the Church. It has never been otherwise in the history of the Church.

In America we have just begun the attempt to integrate ourselves into the broad intellectual life around us. The initial phase is troublesome enough; increased integration will bring more, not fewer, problems. The reason for this is, I think, evident. It is far simpler and easier for the Catholic intellectual to achieve recognition and status within and outside of the Church than it is for him to know what to do with this status once achieved. We have been told how to achieve integration; we do not yet understand how to live with it.

ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL

(For Anna T.)

Having been taken gently down to die,
And just as gently back, in a white tent,
    Only she knows exactly when
The unexpected turning came. Now, spent
With her strange journey, she is glad to lie
    Quiet, going back again.

Each morning and each evening in a civil
New England monotone a nun repeats
    Appropriate *memento mori;*
And some of us who live in shrouding sheets
Grow apprehensive, miss a medieval
    Persuasion in the oratory.

But never Anna. Often under her breath
She tells the black beads in her older tongue:
    Ave Maria, placidly,
While memory runs in her like a song
That when it came, the hour of her death
    Was as they told her it would be.

MIRIAM WHAPLES.

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"To the President"

AN OPEN LETTER FROM SOUTH AMERICAN STUDENTS

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT of "moderate" Latin American beliefs and attitudes has not been widely publicized in the United States, but in the opinion of some on-the-scene observers its appearance was the most significant development of President Eisenhower's entire Latin American tour. Those who have formed their estimates of our Latin American relations on the basis of the headlines and official photographs will be surprised at the depth of anti-United States feeling revealed in this statement. That such harsh criticisms are voiced by representative, non-Communist young people makes them, we think, all the more disturbing and important. Unpleasant as they may be, they are facts the United States must face. —THE EDITORS.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: Welcome to Chile. Accept through us the cordial greeting of twenty-five thousand university students in the seven Chilean universities who tomorrow will have much of the responsibility for the destiny of their country. We know that your obligations are many and that your time is short. But we believe that an American like you will find the human and social actuality of these countries more important than protocol routine.

The leaders of our Chilean students have been elected by the various student federations through a direct, free and secret vote, and they include representation of all minority tendencies. Most of us are Christians. And almost all—Christians and freethinkers alike—are firm supporters of democracy, opposed to every sort of dictatorship. May we, then, express in a friendly manner, and with all due respect and frankness, our views on certain fundamental aspects of the relationship between the United States and Latin America—and Chile?

The relationship between the United States and the twenty Latin American peoples is set forth in a series of treaties and other international juridical documents, obligatory and still in force, such as the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro (1947), the Pact of Bogotá (1948), the Declaration of Caracas (1954), the military treaties, etc., etc., which make up the Inter-American system. What is the basic political philosophy animating all these agreements? One objective is quite clear: to establish in a manner that is legally binding the solidarity of the destiny of Latin America and of the United States in this perilous world situation. Such an objective represents a full-fledged success for North American diplomacy. We have gone on from the status of "good neighbors" virtually without realizing it, to become "partners" in the world policies of the United States.

The truth is that the Inter-American System is the most complete of many international agreements in which the United States has a part. But it is equally true that in no other series of pacts does the United States obtain more advantages with so few obligations toward its associates. If this imbalance continues, not only will it compromise Pan-American relations but it will destroy the moral and political justification for the Inter-American System as such.

In short, to express things with the frankness we promised at the outset: the Inter-American System so far has been a series of agreements accepted by the weak in favor of the strong and by the poor in favor of the rich. No one can say exactly what these reciprocal obligations are, or how important they are, when a strong and wealthy nation contracts them with nations that are weak and poor.

What is to be done? Reciprocity and not aid must be the moral basis of the Inter-American System. And true reciprocity between the United States and Latin America must materialize in three fundamental ways:

1. Military security within the hemisphere by other means than armed force (more than a million and a half dollars a year are expended by these countries in defending themselves against one another);

2. The promotion of democracy, denying "salt and water" to the dictators and tyrants as they arise (Trujillo, Somoza and Strossner at present), instead of viewing them benevolently and assisting them in the exploitation and degradation of their respective peoples—on the pretext that these dictators are "friends" of the United States and "enemies" of Communism;

3. An economic integration of Latin America that will permit these countries to industrialize and speed up their economic development to a level that is more compatible than the present situation with the elementary demands of civilization.

IN NO one of these three fundamental matters has the United States taken the initiative nor extended the sort of collaboration which would have proved

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decisive in assuring success. Your country has abstained or confined itself to the "lip service" of innocuous declarations. What a contrast with the initiative of the United States and its immense sacrifices, in Europe—the Marshall Plan, NATO, "offshore" arms orders, the Dillon Plan. And these measures were aimed at attaining results comparable to those more urgently needed by the Latin American peoples than by the nations of Western Europe. There tends to be an evasive response when the Latin American countries ask the United States uncompromisingly to modify its policy of armaments, to promote democratic government and to integrate their economies in new international structures. Let us admit that in theory it is different, but in practice the presence or absence of the United States—with its enormous influence and resources of every sort—means the difference between giving immediate actuality to these three fundamental principles and keeping them for approximately another century and a half suspended high in mid-air.

The gap that distinguishes industrial countries from those which produce raw materials grows wider year by year. The capitalism of industrial nations expands at the expense of the underdeveloped peoples, and the prices of raw materials continue to be manipulated by industrial countries, including the United States, through various means—all directed toward "obtaining foreign raw materials at the lowest possible price" (Paley, 1952, "Resources for Freedom").

These means, which appear licit to the directors of the North American economy, are disastrous in their consequences for the Latin American countries. So that if our economy cannot escape from being exploited by other peoples—as European capitalism has for four hundred years—there will be no escape from the merciless exploitation of our own people. In view of the imperatives in the Communist alternative, a moral solution requires just prices and adequate remuneration for the raw materials that we sell to the industrialized countries.

We realize that the substitution of the false concept of "the market mechanism" for an ethical concept of just prices which conforms to the needs of the producing countries raises many practical problems. But all can be resolved if this new coordinating principle in the economic relationship between the United States and Latin America comes to be recognized.

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." It appears appropriate to us to cite these words of Our Lord in comment on a basic issue. Has the United States come to be "a satisfied nation" that seeks to maintain the status quo in the world generally and in Latin America? The danger that this may be the case is a possibility we discuss more vigorously day by day. If that is the way things are, we must tell you, Mr. President, with all respect that the United States will have little or nothing to offer our younger generation or the vast multitude of the poor who comprise ninety per cent of the Latin American people. And we would have little or nothing to hope for from the leadership and genius of North America.

IN THE United States or in Western Europe there is good reason to fight "to defend the existing order." For the social order achieved in these areas represents benefits shared by all: personal liberty, social justice, true equality before the law, high cultural, scientific and technical achievements, satisfactory living standards, etc., etc. In Latin America "to defend the existing order" means to uphold the privileges of the narrow social stratum embodying power and wealth surrounded by an ocean of people living in misery and for whom the "social order" means very little or literally nothing. What is the proof? Although nearly seven per cent of the world's population lives in Latin America on land that amounts to sixteen per cent of the habitable area of the earth, the real situation of our living conditions as a whole is reflected in the following: Two-thirds of the population, one hundred and twenty million people, live in a chronic state of malnutrition; two out of every five Latin Americans are illiterate; Latin America has the lowest rate of economic development in the West (one per cent per year per capita) and registers an average income of $275 a year per person.

If trees are known by their fruits, it is ridiculous to claim that this is a Christian order or a democratic order to which can aspire the great multitude of the hungry and illiterate who are dispossessed of culture, rights, freedom, and goods, and who account for the vast majority of the people of Latin America. That would be a sin against the Holy Spirit! And if the injustice obtaining today is all that Christianity or democracy have to offer on this continent, no one should be surprised that the more educated sons of these downtrodden people should seek in Communism those elementary goods which are now lacking and which are required by morality and civilization: literacy, homes and bread.

It is certain that the United States finds those who are apparently its best friends—men always ready to uphold North American objectives no matter what they are, to cajole North American functionaries and to serve North American business—in the small group of privileged Latin Americans whom the "existing order" in this hungry and illiterate area provides with levels of income and living conditions multi-millionaires in the United States would envy. But they are not "friends" of the United States, but friends of their own privileges who seek to confuse North American interests with their own in order to be themselves sustained by the United States.

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Mr. President, we believe that it is important that the great mission of the United States in Latin America not be compromised by efforts to defend the existing order or to aggrandize that order's selfish beneficiaries. That mission should rather be to encourage by all legitimate means those who struggle to create a new social order closer to the immortal definition of Lincoln, "government of the people, for the people and by the people."

The Cuban revolution is followed with acute attention and great hope by all progressive Latin American circles—university youth above all. We know and applaud, Mr. President, your recent calm and respectful official declaration supporting the full self-determination of the Cuban people, so different, unhappily, from the campaign of hatred, calumny and distortion ceaselessly spread by the two great North American news agencies and stridently published by the Latin American press which serves the selfish interests of those groups who believe that they are threatened. The incendiary anti-Cuban campaign reflects the complicity of certain Latin American countries hoping to benefit from a reduction of the Cuban quota for sugar bought by the United States. (To petty and despicable compatriots such as these Latin America owes the defeat of its hopes and its material poverty!) These men tend to renew, then, the periodical pressures aimed at paralyzing the Cuban government in its plans for social reform and even call for a shameful foreign intervention.

HONORED Sir, in our modest opinion North American intervention in Cuba would be, to quote Talleyrand, "not only a crime but a vast stupidity." It would be an unpardonable affront which would mortally weaken the moral and psychological foundation of the Inter-American System and for the collaboration of our peoples in its behalf. You would gain the self-interested applause of a small circle of individuals that urge you to intervene because that would further their own hidden interests, but you would suffer the permanent loss of the respect and confidence of the younger generation, and the poor and the decent elements in Latin America.

In writing these words, we want you to know that we do not extend our unqualified support to the Cuban experiment. We too, have distaste for the protracted interval of personal power there and the lack of institutions created clearly in accordance with the popular will. But it seems to us grossly immoral to qualify the Cuban revolution as "Communist," either its government or its social achievements, particularly its agrarian reforms.

We shall not go into many footless details but only express our concern and scandal on finding that the North American news agencies and a number of legislators and public figures in the United States attack in Cuba as "Communist" an agrarian reform which is more moderate and generous toward former landowners than the agrarian reform carried out by General MacArthur in Japan or those wholeheartedly supported by the United States in Egypt, Israel, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, etc.

Why is there this difference in attitude? Is it perhaps because in Cuba seven North American companies are owners of some five billion acres? If that is the reason why the United States attacks in Cuba what it has supported unreservedly in other countries, how can we escape the sorry reflection that private North American capital is the worst threat to our full national self-determination and social progress? Has anyone estimated what may be the sad consequences of such a conviction?

An Ambassador from the United States spoke here in Santiago last year in an arrogant fashion (a speech which the Chilean Senate repudiated by a unanimous vote) of the "Lesson of Guatemala." Others apparently are now working on "the lesson of Cuba."

Because your personal and official position on these matters, Most Honored Sir, has been so clear and distinct, we do not think that we are criticizing you when we say that those who seek to give Latin America "lessons" of submission to private North American interests are digging the grave of the Inter-American System and also—also—of democracy itself in this part of the world. Have a care! These hard-pressed peoples are much nearer than the satisfied of this world realize to the limits of their resistance and the point of breaking off.

World conditions have changed remarkably and go on changing at a dizzy pace. Fears are no longer uppermost but reason and justice; not fear but inspiration and example are the new weapons in the struggle for the minds of men and the confidence of the various peoples in the world today. Therefore, you must know, Mr. President, that the university students in Chile support wholeheartedly the solemn statement made by you in respect to the free self-determination of the Cuban people and we indignantly reject and condemn any attempt—of governments or private interests—to intervene in Cuba by armed forces, economic reprisals or by the aggressive propaganda of which the Cuban revolution has been victim for so long.

Mr. President: We beg your indulgence for this long letter which we feel dutybound to place in your hands on the solemn occasion of your first visit to South America and to our country. Never before as now, and in no other place better than in Latin America, can the United States—if it wishes—demonstrate to the world what humanity can hope for from the country of Washington, Lincoln and Roosevelt. Accept our respectful homage.

THE FEDERATION OF CHILEAN STUDENTS.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

MR. NIXON has stated that he does not intend to reply to personal attacks in the coming Presidential campaign. And it is almost certain that he will not make any, for if there is one image Mr. Nixon does not want to revive this year it is that of the hit-and-run campaigner he used to be.

Of course we do not know who the Democratic candidates will be; none of the present contenders has Mr. Nixon's certainty about his own immediate destiny. But we are told that it is almost certain a Catholic will occupy either first or second place on the ticket. This leads me to believe that, however gentlemanly the contest between the candidates themselves, the nation can not avoid a brutal outburst of anti-Catholicism. And when the anti-Catholicism erupts, it will be a miracle if there is no bitter Catholic reaction to match it. So while the formal side of the contest may be a model of civilized dialogue, with even the formidable Richard M. Nixon endorsing Stevensonian statesmanship, the campaign itself promises to be something of a brawl which will arouse the fiercest of all loyalties, those of religion.

From the beginning, I have been struck by the fact that the whole Catholic-for-President controversy has been wrapped in unrealities, however real the controversy is as a political fact of life. I say this because I believe that many of the issues raised, though they are real enough as intellectual problems, have little or no bearing on how a John F. Kennedy or any other Catholic President would behave.

Take, for instance, the continuing and impassioned hassle about the famous "Catholic State" thesis and the Syllabus of Errors. In the realm of theory, these questions comprise a major problem for American Catholics, and indeed for Catholics all over the world. In some parts of the world, where official religious intolerance and political authoritarianism are still canonized by law, they are a major, concrete political problem. But any American with a grain of political sense must know that no Catholic office-holder would be fool enough to try to revolutionize American thinking on the relationship between Church and State, even if he wanted to. Still, the candidate with a Catholic background is burdened with this controversy as if it were of the greatest immediacy. In all probability, he never even heard about the Catholic-State thesis until it was forced upon him, and it is a sure thing that after he has heard about it, he will proclaim that he is not having any, thank you, meaning what he says quite sincerely. Nevertheless, he can not escape the issue that easily. He will be saddled with it throughout his campaign.

Or, to take another example, consider the statement that got Senator Kennedy into such hot water in the Catholic press after his *Look* article came out. Kennedy said that nothing transcends the office-holder's duty to uphold the Constitution. Thereupon he was lectured in a hundred editorials and from a thousand pulpits on the simple Biblical truth that God is to be obeyed before man. Now obviously the Senator is aware of that basic principle of Christian theology. All he actually said, however, was that if he were sworn to uphold the Constitution, he would do so without qualification, an unexceptionable statement for any politician. Had he said any less than that, he would not have been worthy of anyone's vote. But the angry editors who lectured him wanted more. They were outraged because he did not add that God is to be served before all else—an unassailable theological proposition which would have been irrelevant in this case.

I am afraid that whoever the Catholic candidate is, he can not escape irrelevance of this kind. He will have to take positions on any number of trumped-up issues. He will have to grasp one horn or the other of any number of unreal dilemmas. He will have to profess undying adherence to any number of truisms which it would never occur to him to challenge.

From the beginning of time, of course, candidates for a major office have had to burn a pinch of incense before the various tribal gods in their midst. But this Catholic candidate will be required to outdo them all.

In the background, while the candidate runs through these paces, an assortment of emotional outbursts will provide orchestration for the show. We can expect whispering campaigns and fantastic rumors, dramatic endorsements and shocking apostasies, and, throughout, sober and utterly conscientious considerations of issues which have no real political validity. The campaign promises to be exhilirating and exciting, with the usual element of sordidness and irrelevance.

Actually, no one knows exactly what the over-all character of such a campaign will be like. What I have suggested is inevitable, but it may play a more minor part than we have been led to expect. It is possible that Protestantism on the whole will act responsibly and accept this symbol of the pluralism which has replaced it as the dominant theme of America's religious life, if not with enthusiasm, at least with grace. It is also possible that Catholics, matured and sobered by the responsibility of national power, will behave more rationally in the face of provocation than their neighbors really have a right to expect. But one should expect the worst, I suppose, even while one hopes for the best.

JOHN COGLEY.

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Room at the Middle

by MARTIN GREEN

A NEW KIND of novel has been written in Britain during the last ten years. More than that—though the older writers, like Elizabeth Bowen, Angus Wilson, Graham Greene, continue to produce, and new writers, like William Golding, still join their ranks—the great bulk of interesting new fiction is in this recently developed mode.

It cannot be defined at all inclusively by strict principles of composition. There are some serious differences in form between authors. *Room at the Top,* for instance, is a solidly constructed realistic novel; *Lucky Jim,* and this even true of Amis's later novels, is a flimsily constructed semi-fantasy. Nor is their unity a matter of ideological program. If John Wain's heroes move in a world of ideas, Alan Sillitoe's novel, *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning,* derives its distinction from its innocence of all intellectual concepts. Nor is it that they all deal with working class experience; Amis, for instance, does not.

They are all, however, interested in the texture of life at the moment for the socially average, and lower than average, Englishman; and for these writers "interested in" means concerned for. They have a sharpness of pitch (what is called their Anger) which conveys a sense of responsibility. Amis's heroes are themselves socially above average, but their difficulties, their inner uncertainties, derive a good deal from the contrast between this average life (the boredom at work, the discomfort of lodgings, the price of beer) and the privileged life they are qualified for. In this the new writers differ strikingly from the old. The older writers were predominantly concerned with upper class situations, and when they did depict average life, it was, whether gaily or dismally, with no sense of responsibility, no sense of participation. As a natural corollary, whereas the older novels were set in London, or the country, or abroad, the new writers deal with the provinces and provinciality, or big industrial cities.

There is the same loose similarity linking these writers in matters of form. The new novels have a different kind of hero and make much greater use of him. Their central characters are not brilliant, or sensitive, in the old sense, nor are they gentlemen; they are basically honest, of normal and vigorous instincts, but so driven by contradictory desires and contradictory duties, contradictory fears and resentments, that they are constantly led into ludicrous and humiliating misadventures. The novels are often accounts of their finding some kind of balance, or avoiding some kind of imbalance, between these contradictions. The narrative as well as the thematic interest is concentrated in this central character; the reader is asked to like him, warmly, strongly. This is true of Lucky Jim, Billy Liar, Sillitoe's hero, John Wain's, even John Braine's; the hero of *Room at the Top,* is to be disapproved of but not to be disliked. And this liking has to carry one through the often loosely strung episodes, and perverse opinions, and outrageous behavior.

Structurally, however, we must distinguish two basic patterns. One kind of novel is most often a string of adventures and misadventures, ending with a neat solution of the hero's difficulties—the girl, the money, and the job all his, and the villain defeated. The good people are luridly distinguished from the bad, and the hero's miscalculated advances to the one, and assaults on the other, are so lavishly embroidered that, especially when the story is told in the first person, the effect partakes of fantasy. In the other kind of novel, the fantasy is restricted to the hero's imagination, and the pattern of actual events is sharply opposed to that. We may take Amis and Wain as examples of the first, Braine and Sillitoe of the second. In all of them, however, the role of fantasy, wish-fulfilment and fear-fulfilment, taken both seriously and comically, is important; and in all of them a contrasting realism is continually evoked.

KEITH Waterhouse is thirty-one and has already written a novel in this new mode. *There is a Happy Land* was the story of a childhood on a lower class Yorkshire housing estate, harshly realistic in texture and structure; it belonged to the Braine and Sillitoe wing. His recent novel, *Billy Liar* (W. W. Norton. $3.95.) owes much more to Amis. It is the story of one climactic day in the life of a seventeen-year-old clerk in a Yorkshire town, who is so jaggedly related to his family, his job, and his environment, so eager to escape to London to be a comic-script-writer, and yet so guilty about that maladjustment and wish to escape, that he lives almost wholly in a fantasy world. He lives

Mr. Green, an Englishman who now lives in this country, is on the faculty at Wellesley.

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compulsively and profitlessly, he shirks and steals at his job, he provokes and resents his parents and everyone in authority, he has got himself engaged to three girls simultaneously, none of whom he really wants to marry. Nevertheless he remains a basically honest, warm-hearted, lovable person, who, by the end of the book, is perceptibly making progress along his private eccentric route towards a salvation of decency. Since the story is told by himself, in a lively style, the effect is very similar to that of *Lucky Jim*.

The differences are fairly well indicated by saying that *Billy Liar* is recognizably by the author of *There Is a Happy Land*. Everything is much harsher, and, in a way, more honest. Billy does not get the girl; he is not sure he wants her enough; he does not get the job in London; he has made too much of a mess of his life in Stradhoughton. He does not have the approval of all the good characters, as Lucky Jim Dixon did; his one "friend" (as he says, he has no friends, only temporary allies) turns on him in the end as cruelly as do his parents, his employers, his fiancées, and everyone else. He pays the full price of his fantasying. Also the objective facts of life are much harsher; Billy's father and mother are both more pained and more paining than Professor and Mrs. Welch, and the descriptions of Stradhoughton's dance halls and ash pits and dullness are not primarily comic.

Perhaps this is why the book does not succeed. Its honesty is of a kind inappropriate to the comic mode. Mr. Waterhouse does not see the real situation as funny, and he is unwilling to tamper with reality to permit of comic effects. Wish-fulfilment *really* seems to him the antithesis of the way things happen, and indulgence in it he obscurely feels to be more immoral than lovable.

Though each particular mood and gesture of Billy's is shrewdly noted, they do not cohere, and at the end I have no vivid sense of him; though each is incongruous and witty, they do not build up into a sense of natural, original humor. The three engagements strike me as one too many; but it is no mechanical miscalculation—two would strike me the same way. It is a mechanicalness in the idea, a forced note in the voice; Mr. Waterhouse does not by natural right control that range of notes in our minds. What we remember at the end of the book are the savagely painful scenes, which are only very subordinately comic; the misfiring of his music hall act, the quarrel with his father, his denunciation by Rita, the fiancée he had thought so stupid she could not be treated as real. This is the range of experience which is Mr. Waterhouse's by right.

THE BRIGHT light that lured him off his more natural course is perhaps as likely to have been J. D. Salinger as Kingsley Amis. A seventeen-year old's comic narration of his complicated misadventures and profound maladjustments, hour by hour over a very short span, could hardly escape some debt to *The Catcher in the Rye*. On internal evidence, it would be difficult to decide whether the honors belong more to Amis or to Salinger. The more interesting point is the extent to which they can be confused, the extent to which they resemble each other, and the parallelism this suggests between British and American literary trends.

Salinger also asks the reader for a warm affection for his heroes, who are also closely identified with himself; those heroes are great liars and fantasists, prone to comic misadventures, profoundly maladjusted, and yet basically decent and lovable; he is a great observer and recorder of the texture of average daily life, and he conveys a sense of painful responsibility for it; he employs an elaborate, self-conscious, clumsily clever style, through which, however, high spirits, seriousness, and naked sincerity are very purely communicated.

Salinger stands pretty much alone in American literature; his imitators have not achieved anything significant in their own right. But I would claim that there is a significant likeness between his *Zooey* and Nabokov's *Lolita,* the two most brilliant pieces of American prose fiction in the last ten years. The likeness is not of course in basic themes or values, but in the rococo diction and sentence forms, the baroque structure, the author's game of hide-and-seek with the writer from behind the narrator, the acute sense of the specifically contemporary and American, above all the gaiety and cleverness, amounting to a delight in life, which are communicated in despite of the major themes. Nabokov, like Salinger, uses fantasy and self-consciousness as his primary means to both a complex personal honesty and a simple excited delight in life. In their ways of doing so they both resemble each other and parallel the new movement in British fiction.

The parallel must of course be with the Amis wing of that movement. Nabokov and Salinger have no significant likeness to John Braine or Alan Sillitoe. And put side by side with them the British fantasists show immediately a much narrower range of experience and a much more imperfect mastery of this mode of writing. Both Salinger and Nabokov are—in the ways in which they resemble each other—very brilliant and perfect artists. This cannot be said of any of the British writers. The most successful novel of these ten years in England is probably Iris Murdoch's *The Bell;* and Iris Murdoch does not belong to the new movement at all. She is much more akin to the older writers, those who looked to France rather than to America for models.

The new British movement, however, gives every sign of continuing, and its work, however imperfect, is vigorous, generous, and intelligent. And it shows a surer sense of a genuine new direction than does American fiction.

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THE SCREEN

LISTEN TO THE HEART

A MOVIE seldom captures the spirit of determined good will as effectively as "Conspiracy of Hearts." In spite of its faults—and this English film does have faults when it sinks to melodrama or allows its story to get too contrived—it is especially successful in showing the power of the good in heart to dispel the machinations of evil. Its script, on the whole well-written by Robert Presnell, Jr., concerns a group of Italian nuns whose convent is near a 1943 Nazi transit camp most of the occupants of which are Jewish orphans rounded up by the Gestapo. Prompted by the nearness of the camp, Christian duty and sympathy for the woebegone youngsters, the nuns, under the leadership of their stout-hearted mother superior (Lilli Palmer), are determined to smuggle as many children as possible out of the camp, into the convent and, with the help of Partisans, on their way to safety.

Needless to say, this rescue work is dangerous, and Director Ralph Thomas, who handles his large cast well, manages to build up quite a suspense: within the convent, where the chaplain (Michael Goodliffe) doubts the prudence of the whole risky business but helps because his heart is in agreement with the conspiracy, and also where one of the nuns (Yvonne Mitchell) insists that the rescues are illegal acts of vanity; and on the outside, where the likable Italian major (Ronald Lewis) conveniently looks the other way—until after the fall of Mussolini, when a German colonel (Albert Lieven) takes over the camp and, assisted by a hell-bent-for-hell lieutenant (overplayed by Peter Arne) tightens the regulations about escapees. The nuns then redouble their efforts, and the German officer, getting wise to what is going on, hopes the nuns will lead him to the Partisans.

Even moviegoers who object to the wrought-up melodrama that "Conspiracy of Hearts" becomes will find worthwhile value in Betty E. Box's excellent production. Ernest Steward's fine black-and-white photography of the Tuscany countryside and of the old monastery of La Certosa di Galluzo near Florence is worth the price of admission. Also rating applause is the acting of the good cast—especially in the highly emotional episodes, when both the nuns and the Jewish kids show restraint even though the subject matter is highly charged with sentiment and heartbreak: the incident in which Sylvia Syms, as a novice, finally succeeds in breaking down the reserve of a little girl who thinks her own name is "Jew Dog," and the later, most stirring sequences when the nuns sneak a Rabbi into the convent basement so the children can observe Yom Kippur. At times "Conspiracy of Hearts" may seem to be a conspiracy against your tear ducts, but even this fact can't blur the film's well-made points about love and understanding.

IT IS too bad that the Italian nuns of "Conspiracy of Hearts" didn't have the current circus movies to help depressed kids into laughter. Circuses speak an international language, and even films about them, unaided by the smells of sawdust and popcorn, put audiences in a receptive mood for fun and excitement. "Circus Stars," another item in the reciprocal cultural exchange agreement between the United States and the U.S.S.R., is a pleasant little Russian documentary about the performers, human and animal, under big tops. It shows the acrobats and aerialists and bareback riders in action and the animals exhibiting their beauty and tricks; and it by no means neglects the clowns, especially Oleg Popov, whose costumes and burlesques have made him famous. Handsomely photographed in color, "Circus Stars" also goes backstage and on the street to display man and beast at ease: best of these shots, and most unusual, has a hippo on a leash out taking a walk with his trainer. But what this cultural exchange film shows most effectively, and without screaming a message, may still be news to some: that circus stars and kids are pretty much the same everywhere.

MOVIEGOERS who prefer a little Americana with their circuses may find "Toby Tyler" to their liking. James Otis Kaler's much-loved 1880 tale (subtitled "Ten Weeks with a Circus") has been updated thirty years for the film, which Disney has given a pleasant 1910 atmosphere; in spite of the juvenile quality of the story, about the orphan who runs away from his guardians to join a circus, the whole thing has a quiet charm that seldom turns up in pictures nowadays. The plot's only villain is the peanut vendor Toby works for, and he's played with enough humor by Bob Sweeney to make audiences overlook some of his meanness. Kevin Corcoran is a delight as the young orphan befriended by the gruff but kindly circus strongman (Henry Calvin). Naive, honest Toby soon wins over most of the circus folk and becomes the special pal of Mr. Stubbs, a chimpanzee which manages, like practically all movie chimps, to steal every scene he's in. Sure-fire fare for young fry, "Toby Tyler" may amuse their elders too.

ANOTHER phase of Americana but much more sophisticated is "Jazz on a Summer's Day," a documentary film produced and directed by photographer Bill Stern at the Newport Jazz Festival. His movie is good both to look at and listen to, with its long program of some fifty leading jazz singers and

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instrumentalists and with its lovely shots of Newport, Rhode Island, the Americana Cup Yacht Races and the enthusiastic audience in a wide variety of garb.

Against a proper New England background the piano of Thelonious Monk, the instruments of the Chio Hamilton Quintet, the singing of Dinah Washington, Anita O'Day and Big Maybelle are uncongruous and hence doubly effective. Fitting in well, as he always does, is Louis Armstrong whose voice and trumpet come through in several lively numbers and are joined appropriately in "Rockin' Chair" by the voice and trombone of Jack Teagarden. Thanks to the good color photography of Stern and his staff, the film, though mainly concerned with the jazz artists on the bandstand, is never static. After running the gamut of jazz the program ends, rightly enough, because by that time it's Sunday, with Mahalia Jackson and her gospel singing. This is a film not only for the squares who want to learn a thing or two about jazz but also for the cats who wish they were on Newport's hot green lawn. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"ECUMENICISM IN GERMANY"

New Rochelle, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Even at this late date, perhaps I might be permitted to make a few additions to Mr. Swidler's "Ecumenicism in Germany" [Jan. 22]. The late Karl August Meissinger, a foremost Lutheran scholar, deserves special mention. His painstaking works on the young Luther bring the latter much closer to present-day Catholicism, than generally recognized (Cf. Meissinger's post-war and post-humous *Der katholische Luther).* In turn, Johann Adam Möhler's almost forgotten classic is still recognized as perhaps the fairest Catholic appraisal of Protestantism. In its 1844 English translation Robertson has a ninety-page historical introduction, still quite valid today (Cf. *Symbolism,* Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences between Catholics and Protestants). It is significant that this classic has just been reissued in German (Cf. *Symbolik,* 1958, Jakob Hegner Verlag, Köln & Olten). Both these works are invaluable for that first step in the direction of unity, "to know and love each other better." ERNST F. WINTER.

Greensburg, Pa.

TO THE EDITORS: I have been catching up with back issues of The Commonweal, and have read with interest Leonard Swidler's article on "Ecumenicism in Germany" in the issue of 22 January, 1960. Mr. Swidler might have mentioned another Catholic activity with an ecumenical objective, namely, The Catholic Conference on Ecumenical Questions. The Conference, while not exclusively German, has from its beginning in 1952 enjoyed the support of the Archbishop of Paderborn and the Bishop of Mainz, and the participation of notable German theologians. The annual meeting of the Conference was held in September, 1959 at the Johann Adam Möhler Institute in Paderborn, which Mr. Swidler mentions. The Conference numbers somewhat less than fifty Catholic theologians, biblical scholars and historians, with representatives from the Netherlands, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, England and the United States. The Secretary and executive head of the Conference is Rt. Rev. Msgr. J. G. M. Willebrands of Warmond, the Netherlands. The purpose of this body is to pursue studies which correspond to the studies and interests of Protestant and Orthodox theologians, and to confer with these latter at times and in ways sanctioned by the Holy Office. The Catholic Conference on Ecumenical Questions holds only closed meetings, and does not publish its proceedings. As a member of the Conference, however, I can attest to the value and fruitfulness of its ecumenical endeavors.

(Rev.) WILLIAM GRANGER RYAN,
President, Seton Hill College.

"THE DANGERS OF BIGNESS"

Bronx, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: If more penetrating and readable columns are being published today than those which John Cogley furnishes consistently to The Commonweal this writer would deem it a favor to learn where they may be found. His column, "The Dangers of Bigness," was a forceful reminder of the profound dictum of Mr. Justice Brandeis, "There is a curse that goes with bigness."

Some of The Commonweal's readers, especially in the younger group, may be interested to know that when Louis D. Brandeis portrait was unveiled in the law school of Harvard University in 1938 Monsignor John A. Ryan delivered one of the two addresses. He concluded his address with the statement: "Justice Brandeis is one of the two or three genuinely great Americans of our time."

When Justice Brandeis resigned from the Supreme Court in 1939 the *Christian Century* testified (and the testimony was shared generally by the press in the United States): "Today Justice Brandeis is regarded by Americans of all political and social stripes as the great exemplar of what a judge should be." Yet in 1916 when President Wilson had nominated Louis D. Brandeis as an associate justice of the Supreme Court members of the bar, politicians, and representatives of

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a variety of other groups had protested to the judiciary committee of the Senate, "that he was a radical," "a man with socialistic tendencies", who lacked the "judicial temperament." These hearings before the Senate Committee were prolonged for four months—so powerful, bitter, and even vicious was the opposition to him. The minority report signed by five Senators, three of whom were prominent and distinguished characterized the future Justice Brandeis as one "whose reputation for honesty and integrity amongst his associates has proved to be bad, which reputation has been justified by his own conduct."

The paths of those who have fought the battles of the common man and shown themselves consistent and resourceful foes of plutocracy never have been smooth. Such paths probably never will be.

(Rev.) E. HAROLD SMITH.

"AN IRISH SUCCESS"

Princeton, N.J.

TO THE EDITORS: Mr. Hynes' perceptive article on Brendan Behan [Mar. 4] contains a sensible and clear discussion of "Borstal Boy" and *The Hostage*. However, one point ought to be made about the dead soldier and his song at the end of *The Hostage*.

It is true that the man is shot by accident in the last scene and arises, a few lines later, to sing. However, this is not merely the result of Behan's indifference to or incapability of making comments on the situation. The song the soldier presents both ends the play and contains the essence of Behan's comments on the whole Irish situation.

It has been several months since I saw *The Hostage* in London. As I remember it, however, the soldier comes down stage front (with an eerie green spotlight to make him look like a corpse) and sings, directly at the audience "The bells of hell go ting-aling-aling, for you but not for me—Oh death where is thy sting-aling-aling, oh grave, thy victory" (my memory is oral and the punctuation may not be correct. In other words the blame and the damnation for his death (and the boy in the Belfast jail) are on everybody connected with the I.R.A. and the British Empire, not the soldier. He merely went where he was posted; this is made quite clear earlier in the play. He is not really involved in the Irish Revolution, nor in the decisions of his commanding officers. It is the ridiculous, tragic situation in Ireland which has made him a corpse that sings. The unstated but continually implied criticism that Behan makes throughout the play is that neither side is possessed of common humanity or common sense, to say nothing of *caritas* (the closest thing to it is a useless attempt by the old I.R.A. man to let the soldier go). At the end of the play, then, the statement of the song is to be taken literally, and St. Paul's words apply to the soldier. Both he and the boy in the Belfast jail are dead, and where is the victory for either side? The audience are involved equally, as the song is addressed to them. In the London production, the cast sings the song after the boy, singing "for us, but not for him," reinforcing the point.

Behan's feelings about the lack of sense and humanity are typical of much Irish writing about the revolution—several pieces of O'Casey appear similar to me (although much better done) and something of the same attitude is in Yeats' later poems.

Two minor points of interest: the audience, the night I saw the play, could only be described as in a state of shock after various statements made, especially in the second act. They seemed incapable of believing any of the charges made of British cruelty in the Easter Rebellion, and they retaliated by attacking the play during the intermission.

Secondly, neither Mr. Hynes nor any other critic of Behan I have read makes the obvious connection between *The Hostage* and *The Beggar's Opera*—or perhaps more directly, *The Threepenny Opera*. These antecedents are a great deal of help in understanding why the play can end as it does, with a parody of a music-hall song that dates (so far as I know) some twenty years before the play.

NORMAN D. HINTON.

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Education and the Genuine Situation of Childhood

MARIA MONTESSORI: HER LIFE AND WORK. By E. M. Standing. Academy Library Guild. $5.25.

By JOHN J. McDERMOTT

WHEN ONE considers the extraordinary amount of literature that has been devoted to education, whether in terms of its philosophical foundations or practical activities, it is strange, indeed, that this book is to my knowledge the first detailed study in English of Maria Montessori. It is even more strange when one considers the profundity of her thought, the European success of her doctrines and the affinity of her main concerns with what is most significant on the contemporary scene, namely, the nature of the child, the central character of empirical data and scientific method, and the primacy of evolution and the developmental in doctrines concerning man.

There are some recent exceptions to this neglect, the Whitby school in Connecticut and a feature article by Nancy Rambusch in the April 1958 issue of *Jubilee* come to mind, but the thought of Montessori remains largely untapped. Perhaps one reason for this, though by no means a sound one, may stem from the fact that those espousing Dewey's approach to education are for the most part committed to a non-religious view of the child and the school, and as such are apparently put off by Montessori's pervasive concern for the religious dimension, whereas those more amenable to the latter are uneasy with her radical doctrine of freedom and her unequivocal dependence on the biological and developmental aspects of the child. Both these vantage points certainly misinterpret Montessori and fail as well to do justice to the orientations from which they themselves proceed.

Given these circumstances, Mr. Standing's book is extremely welcome, for he has brought together the main lines of her thought and placed them in the context of their concrete application in the Montessori schools. Seeing her as a "great and representative personality," Mr. Standing reviews her early career as a physician and lecturer and her discovery in 1906 of the "normal characteristics of childhood."

Reversing the usual approach which conceives of the child as a fertile field in which the adult plants the seeds of sound development, Montessori "discovered that children possess different and higher qualities than those we usually attribute to them. It was as if a higher form of personality had been liberated and a new child had come into being." Emphatic in her denial that the child is a small adult, Montessori devoted her life to the discovery and realization of these "normal characteristics."

Mr. Standing rightly holds that the search for the "normalized child" is at the heart of the Montessori method and is the catalyst that allowed her so many fruitful insights into the genuine situation of childhood. Bereft of preconceptions and as genuine an empiricist as we are likely to find, Montessori discovers a succession of startling laws at work in the child. Mr. Standing constantly cites Montessori's contention that it is not the imposition of her "handling" of children, but is rather the scrupulous obedience to the heretofore hidden capacities of the child, that is the source of her method.

For this reason, the core of the book is devoted to an explication of Montessori's analysis of the nature of these capacities or "normalized characteristics." Mr. Standing sketches Montessori's notion of the "sensitive periods" in which children reveal definite physiologically conditioned periods for order, language, refinement of senses and manners. He proceeds to show how this radically transforms the notion of "work" as found in the child so that a veritable passion for "work" is characteristic of children in a Montessori environment, precisely because the proper rhythm between their personal obligations, intellectual development and the unfolding of the deepest recesses of their being has been successfully established.

He also presents Montessori's notion of the "prepared environment" and tells of the famous "exercises in practical life" that are at the center of the Montessori method. Present throughout is her fundamental emphasis on the intimate relationship existing between the highest activities of the life of the mind and their "sensorial foundations." Central also is Montessori's deep awareness that the child cannot grow in mind except as he grows in all of his personal and social dimensions and thus the deep communitarian leanings of the "prepared environment."

Mr. Standing accompanies all of his analyses with many references to concrete practices in the Montessori schools. This is particularly necessary with regard to her position on freedom and discipline. Outside the context of her obvious success, one would simply be incredulous at the possibility of thirty youngsters under seven busying themselves for an entire day in the grip of what Gabriel Marcel calls a "mysterious happiness," conditioned only by the gentle presence of a directress. Throughout the world, however, this is apparently the result whenever her "prepared environments" are correctly put into being. Nothing in Montessori's pedagogy deserves analysis and trial so much as does her notion of freedom, which follows the laws of normalization and seems to promise possibilities far beyond what we have presently reached in educational practices.

Sometimes marred by a lack of sophistication in style and by a failure to avoid the uncritical and sentimental pitfalls of the official disciple, this book remains an important contribution. Such inadequacies should not waylay its role

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Weekly Criticism

IN ALL CONSCIENCE. By Harold C. Gardiner, S.J. Hanover House. $3.95.

By THOMAS E. CASSIDY

THROUGH the years, Father Harold Gardiner has been literary editor for *America,* the Jesuit weekly. In lively and bright prose, he has fought what he sees as the gross, the cheap, the vulgar, and the prurient in modern literature and the arts. *In All Conscience* is a collection of much of this thinking and writing on things of the mind in the United States.

Father Gardiner divides his selections into three parts: "Books in Our Culture," "Other Cultural Leaves," and "Miscellany." Each section gathers together varied treatments of varied themes, but all have the common chord of "what is right," and "what is wrong" in our approach to literature. He deals with many contemporary novels in book essays, with censorship and morality in literature, with films, with columns and comments by other critics; in short, with the busy world of such books, articles, plays, and movies; and books, articles and reviews *about* those works.

He makes many points that are not made in conventional comments on books and authors. Some of them seem obvious, and others seem original, but all make the reader ask the question: why hasn't someone emphasized this before? He writes, for example, on "Modern Authors Can Be Gentlemen," comparing style in writing to graciousness in deportment, and goes on to discuss the decline of style in modern writing. Or he examines the possibility that "the common man can be and often is, not a heel, but a humble hero," in his essay "The Hollow Men Give Way to Heroes?"

His discussion of books as cultural ambassadors includes some analytical appraisals of contemporary American letters as read by foreigners. The main point is that "in the cold war one of the hottest fronts is the cultural front." Father Gardiner points to the negative impact of such a book as *The Ugly American,* assesses the British reaction to the comic book invasion, and in general regrets the "unflattering tag" which the Western world pins on us for our brutality, sentimentality, and even pornography in much of our "cultural" export. Among other suggestions, he hopes that the United States will make better use of UNESCO with a view toward exporting the best of our cultural products.

In the area of censorship, movies, and television, Father Gardiner does some expert viewing-with-alarm of such things as the resurgence of films glorifying gangsters, the decline of the movie industry and its consequent desperate efforts to recapture box office at any cost, and the saturation of the public by picture magazines. But most significant and provocative are his essays on censorship, and the problems of reviewers and censorship. Father Gardiner is well known for his presentation of tenets for reviewers. Here he is especially interested in discussing reasons for and practices concerning censorship. Further, he deals effectively with the overzealous and 4-alarm-fire type of critic, who cries havoc in the face of a complexity which baffles him. Father Gardiner's discussion here does much to crystallize the good sense inherent in the Church's position, the good sense which is often turned into an arbitrary watchdog position. As he says finally: "Apparently the Church believes that Catholic critics can be trusted to think together with Her while using their own best judgment."

REVIEWERS

John J. McDermott earned his Ph.D. at Fordham University. He is now on the faculty of Queens College.

Thomas E. Cassidy is a member of the English department of Southern Illinois University.

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Birgit Nilsson of the Met

OPERAS have dominated the recording scene in the last month or two. London Records alone has come up with four virtually flawless albums: *Aida, Peter Grimes, La Boheme* and *King Arthur.* Angel Records offers a Beecham-conducted *Carmen,* which belongs in this class, and an interesting, but uneven, *Girl of the Golden West.* The latter features the soprano sensation of the current Metropolitan season, Birgit Nilsson, who also appears on two recital discs—a Beethoven, Mozart, Weber program (Angel), and *Tristan and Isolde* excerpts (London).

To consider Miss Nilsson's work first, record buyers may be puzzled at the praise heaped upon her by the New York critics this season. On disc, there is no doubting the lady's phenomenal power which enables her to float tones above a Wagnerian orchestra, even in fortissimo passages; still, this singer's volume is almost too much for her to handle: the tone begins to spread; she has trouble negotiating quick scales; and in *Girl of the Golden West,* although she displays intelligence and good voice placement, the voice wobbles just enough in the opening lines—short, simple, declarative statements—to fault the pitch.

In the Beethoven, Weber, Mozart recital, only Mozart's *"Or sai, chi l'onore"* emerges in good shape. The other items, including such standards as *"Ah, Perfido"; "Abscheulicher";* and *"Ozean, du Ungeheuer,"* are ragged. The ascending notes in the adagio of *"Abscheulicher,"* for example, are not executed cleanly and they are not squarely on pitch.

Miss Nilsson's finest moment on record to date is the *"Liebestod"* in the *Tristan* recital, a thing of vocal grandeur and dramatic accuracy. Unfortunately, conductor Hans Knappertsbusch vitiates the rest of the program with plodding pace and interminably stretched-out phrasing.

Have the Met's critics been extravagant, then, in their acclamation of Miss Nilsson? We think not, for recent broadcasts of her Metropolitant appearances indicate she has learned to use her vocal power, to control it and make it serve her purposes. These discs, it must be remembered, were recorded a year or more ago; very obviously, Miss Nilsson has grown considerably in the intervening months. This age is blessed with a great new Wagnerian soprano; but it is too early to tell whether her repertoire will extend as successfully to Verdi, Puccini and Mozart.

* * *

The sonic splendor alone of London's four new opera albums would commend them to serious attention. But, coupled with the sonics and stage realism are strong casts (in *Aida* and *Boheme*) and historical values (first recordings of *Peter Grimes* and *King Arthur.*

The cast for *Aida* includes Renata Tebaldi, Giulietta Simionato,

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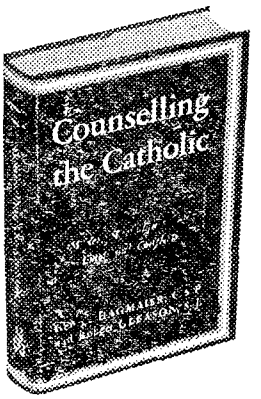

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Carlo Bergonzi, Cornell MacNeil, Fernando Corena. These along with the Vienna Philharmonic and the Chorus of the Friends of Music, are led by Herbert van Karajan who shows here, as he did several years ago in Angel's recording of *Falstaff,* why he is a regular at La Scala. Karajan's triumphal march and ballet may not be quite the sumptuous spectacle conjured by Toscanini, but London's realization of the sonic potentialities of this work more than compensates for what little the Karajan interpretation lacks at these one or two points. This *Aida* is even more breathtakingly real than London's *Das Rheingold,* the stereo spectacular of 1959, if only because the opera has so many more built-in opportunities for aural effectiveness and London's engineers have seized each of them.

The *La Boheme* cast has Tebaldi, Bergonzi, Corena, Gianno D'Angelo, Ettore Bastianini and Cesare Siepi. Soloists and the St. Cecelia Academy Orchestra and Chorus of Rome are directed by Tullio Serafin, who is at the top of his form in matters of pace, dramatic thrust, balance between orchestra and singers.

As in most Puccini operas, everything pivots on the tenor and soprano, and in the album at hand. Bergonzi and Tebaldi are far and away the most appealing Rodolfo and Mimi on records. Based only on this album, Bergonzi must be ranked as the best Puccini tenor going: he has an extraordinarily clear-voiced lyrical gift, sensitive understanding and dramatic involvement and, as a consequence, the ability to make the passion and the action of the moment entirely credible.

* * *

Britten's *Peter Grimes* makes out the strongest case to date for opera in English though, of course, it cannot quite overcome the inherent difficulties of the language when sung, that is, its angularity and the fact that so many of its words end with musically unlovely mouth-closing and jaw-closing consonants, as contrasted, say, with the openness of Italian in which most words end

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with a vowel and those that do not invariably act as if they do with their "ol" and "or" endings.

Grimes, sung by Peter Pears, is the victim of gossip in a small English fishing community. He eventually loses his mind and casts off to sea in a fishing boat and disappears. On this essentially simple story line, Britten has constructed a marvelously organic opera-drama: village life is seen "in the round"; the characters come to life; and the choral and orchestral writing is dramatically effective in its economy of means, its passion and its theatrical orientation. Britten himself conducts the singers and the Covent Garden Royal Opera House orchestra and chorus, so that the production is "authoritative" but it is much more than that—it is historically valuable and, more importantly, it is a most moving musical experience.

Henry Purcell's scenic music for Dryden's *King Arthur* is completely delightful. It is melodiously inventive, exuberantly performed and brilliantly and sweetly recorded, all under the direction of Anthony Lewis on London's L'Oiseau-Lyre label. The St. Anthony Singers and the Philomusica Orchestra of London (with Thurston Dart at the harpsichord, continuo and organ) back a handsome group of soloists, including Elsie Morison, countertenor John Whitworth, John Cameron and Trevor Anthony.

Sir Thomas Beecham lifts what might have been merely a good performance of *Carmen* far above that level in a new Angel album. A case in point are the dances to which he gives a welcome delicacy and polish. Victoria de los Angeles is not the sultry, dusky-toned Carmen we have been brought up on, but the beauty of her voice re-establishes an older tradition. Nicolai Gedda's Don Jose is the most idiomatic available and Janine Micheau as Micaela is letter-perfect. Chorus and orchestra are the French Radiodiffusion and they respond impeccably to Sir Thomas's revivifying baton. Easily this is the finest Carmen on the market.

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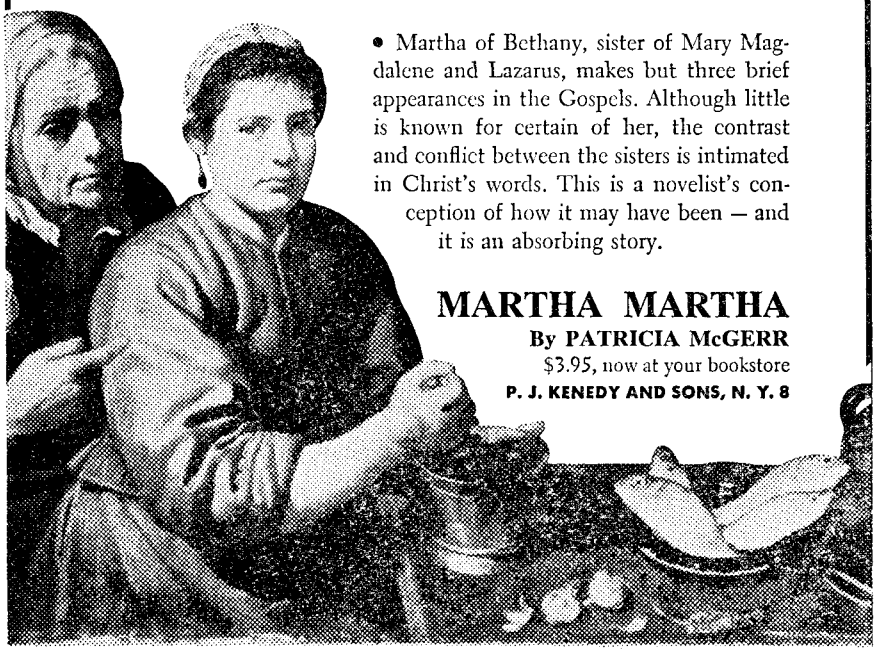

• Martha of Bethany, sister of Mary Magdalene and Lazarus, makes but three brief appearances in the Gospels. Although little is known for certain of her, the contrast and conflict between the sisters is intimated in Christ's words. This is a novelist's conception of how it may have been — and it is an absorbing story.

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